



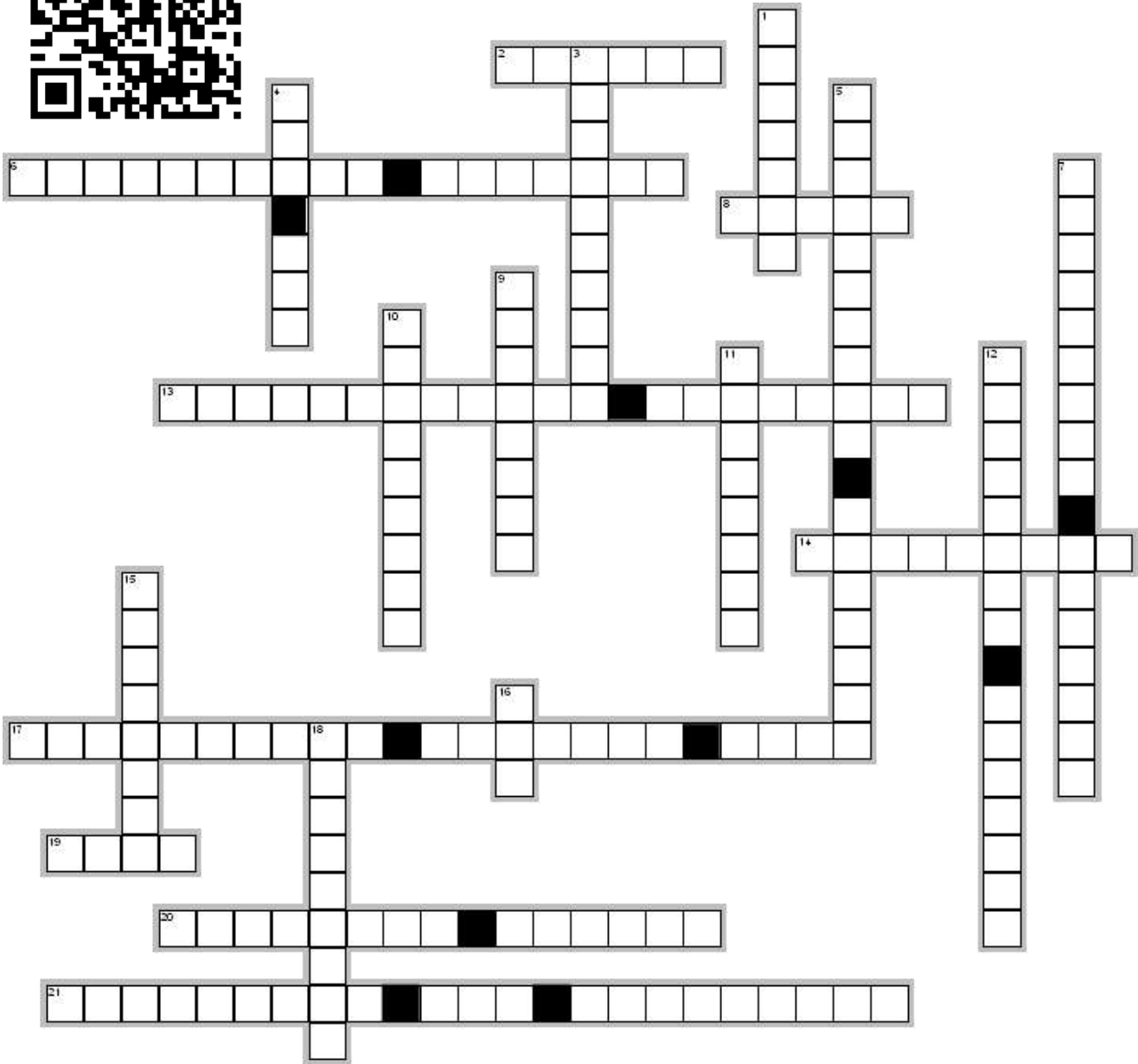
The sagebrush **steppe** is a vast landscape that covers much of the western half of the country. The **ecosystem** supports a **diversity** of plants and wildlife, containing more than 400 plant species and providing **habitat** for more than 250 animal species. Some animals rely on **sagebrush** to live. These “sagebrush **obligate**” species include pygmy rabbits, sage thrashers, sage-grouse and sagebrush lizards.

Sage-grouse have a unique mating ritual. Male sage-grouse gather in a **lek** to competitively display by inflating their **air sacs** and making a unique popping sound to attract female sage-grouse. Once a female sage-grouse lays her eggs (up to nine eggs in one nest) she begins **brooding** to keep the eggs warm. Baby sage-grouse first eat insects, before moving on to **forbs** (small non-woody plants that aren’t grasses) and eventually eating sagebrush.

The sagebrush steppe faces many threats, including **invasive plants** and **habitat fragmentation**. One invasive plant, cheatgrass, is dangerous because it causes fires that destroy sagebrush. Habitat fragmentation occurs when land is developed and breaks up the sage-grouse’s **historic habitat**. As sagebrush (which provides natural hiding places for many animals) becomes scarce, **predators** such as hawks and coyotes are able to more easily prey on sage-grouse.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the agency responsible for classifying plants and animals as threatened or **endangered species**. The Greater Sage-Grouse is a **candidate species**, currently listed as “**Warranted but Precluded**,” meaning that it is in danger of **extinction**, but other higher priority species need to be included on the **Endangered Species List** first.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages more than 245 million acres of public land – the largest federal land management agency in the nation. The Greater Sage-Grouse’s **range** covers 11 states and occupies a large percentage of public land. The BLM’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM is developing a **conservation strategy** to help increase sage-grouse populations and avoid Greater Sage-Grouse listing under the Endangered Species Act.



ACROSS

2. A Russian word meaning treeless plain or a non-forested region dominated by grasses and low shrubs. **6.** A plant or animal that is in imminent danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. **8.** The geographic area or spatial distribution in which a species is normally found. **13.** An approach for protecting a particular species, habitat or ecosystem. **14.** A shrub that has silver-grey leaves, yellow flowers and grows in arid sections of the western United States and Canada. **17.** A list of plants and animals that are in danger of becoming extinct that is maintained by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as required by the Endangered Species Act. **19.** An herbaceous plant that is not a grass. **20.** A non-native introduced plant that has a negative effect on habitats. **21.** A species that merits listing under the Endangered Species Act, but is not listed because other species present a more urgent priority for listing.

DOWN

1. Place where an animal normally lives or where individuals of a population live. **3.** When the last individual of a species dies. **4.** A structure on the male sage-grouse 's chest that inflates during lekking displays. **5.** Breaks in a species' preferred living area. **7.** A species that will be or is being considered for listing as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. **9.** Totally dependent on another species or a certain habitat for survival. **10.** Variety or a range of different things. **11.** A behavior in which parents warm nestlings or young that cannot maintain their own body temperatures. **12.** Areas where viable populations have not occurred within five years or more. **15.** An animal that lives by killing and eating other animals. **16.** An area where male sage-grouse display for the purpose of gaining breeding territories and attracting females. **18.** A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

WORD BANK - Air Sac, Brooding, Candidate Species, Conservation Strategy, Diversity, Ecosystem, Endangered Species, Endangered Species List, Extinction, Forb, Fragmented Habitat, Habitat, Historic Habitat, Invasive Plants, Lek, Obligate, Predator, Range, Sagebrush, Steppe, Warranted but Precluded

Answers: www.blm.gov/kfkd or use the QR code from above to access the webpage from your smart phone.